

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0301

June 21, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell,

As you continue to push forward towards a vote to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act behind closed doors, I remain extremely concerned about the unknown impacts of proposed legislation on veterans, older Americans, and tribal communities.

Reports indicate that a vote is scheduled for next week on health care legislation that directly implicates providers, hospitals, patients and beneficiaries across our nation. Our veterans, seniors, and families across Indian Country deserve a voice in the policymaking process and cannot meaningfully engage with lawmakers when no public hearings have been held nor any legislative text released.

Veterans have fought for our nation's freedoms, yet their voices are shut out from legislation that will impact their care, especially in rural areas. Seniors have paid into Medicare and Medicaid with the promise of coverage in old age or in the event of disability, yet they cannot weigh in on a bill that could gut the Medicare Trust Fund and harm access to long-term care while raising costs.

Any proposed legislation you are considering that directly impacts American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities must undergo a thorough public debate that includes consultation with tribes whose health, budgets, and economies will be implicated by these decisions in Washington. We cannot in good faith honor our treaties and our commitment to tribal sovereignty without including the voices of tribal stakeholders on an issue that impacts their lives so directly.

I stand ready and willing to work with anyone – regardless of party – on policies that will improve, not decimate health care for all families. We can, and must work together to improve on progress made by holding listening sessions, public hearings, engaging stakeholders, and ensuring Committees of jurisdiction have the opportunity to weigh in and mark up legislation. The American people deserve an analysis from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and state by state budgetary impacts before any final vote. Regular order is more than a partisan talking point – it is a commitment we make to our constituents and the American public that Congress values transparency and accountability.

Sincerely,



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress